

Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

November 17, 2003

7th Congressional District of Maryland
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A message from Congressman Elijah E. Cummings



It is both a privilege and honor to represent you in the United States Congress. While serving you, I will continue outreach efforts to further inform you of legislative action in Congress. I welcome your advice. Government "by the people" is the cornerstone of my legislative philosophy.

*Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress*

On the Internet:
<http://www.house.gov/cummings>

Congressman Cummings Connects Parents, Students to College Financing Resources

To inform parents and college bound students of the various resources available to pay for college, Congressman Cummings hosted two "How to Pay for College" fairs in early November.

The two forums were held, respectively, on Monday, November 3, in Baltimore City, and on Monday, November 10, in Howard County.

This year's forums coincided with recent reports indicating that college tuition across the nation is surging.

In late October, the University System of Maryland's Board of Regents voted to raise tuition at state colleges by an average of about 10 percent during the next school year, warning that the increase may rise even higher to 20 percent. This was consistent with a College Board survey that found that college tuition has increased nation-wide by an average of 40 percent since 1992.

"Higher education is essential for success in today's global information age, so the high cost of tuition should not shut the doors to college for anyone," Congressman Cummings said.

During both forums, a panel of experts provided tips on filling out financial aid forms, information about state and university-based scholarships, and the types of federal financial aid available. Some even discussed less obvious sources for finding money for college. For example, Roberta Goldman of the

Central Scholarship Bureau, shared a story of how a student who worked part-time at a movie theater was able to get a scholarship through the theater's parent company, which offered scholarships for its employees.

Judith Vereen, a Howard County resident and parent said, "The 'How to Pay for College' fair at Wilde Lake High School was excellent. Congressman Cummings must be applauded for spearheading this event on an extremely important topic."

She added, "Congressman Cummings and the speakers were knowledgeable and open about the variety of college education funding sources and the application process for each source."

Those who attended the fairs received a free booklet, compiled by the Office of Congressman Cummings, detailing various college and private scholarship programs. To receive a copy of the free booklet, contact Ms. Philisha Lane (410) 685-9199.

Congressman Cummings said, "In today's uncertain economy, it is important that college bound students learn of every possible scholarship and/or financial aid program, because the annual earnings for Americans with bachelor's degrees are about 60 percent higher than the incomes of those with only a high school diploma. Over a lifetime, that earnings gap can exceed \$1 million."

Congressman Cummings Hosts Forum between Students, School Board in Howard County

At the request of local residents, Congressman Cummings hosted a student forum in Howard County to promote a dialogue between students and Howard County school officials.

Student representatives from 11 Howard County Public High Schools addressed a panel consisting of the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. John O'Rourke, and the five School Board members. The students focused on why they felt an achievement gap existed for African American students within the school system.

All of the students who participated in the forum are members of the Black Student Achievement Program. The issues that were raised included the need to increase the number of African American teachers in the school system, the importance of incorporating Black History into the curriculum, and engaging African American parents.

"This forum allowed the Howard County school board to hear first-hand from the people who are directly affected by their policies," Congressman Cummings said. "These students effectively communicated their concerns to the policy makers in order to create positive change for future students."

The *No Child Left Behind Act* aims to address the gap in standardized test scores between black and white students.

Schools face severe penalties under the education reform law if they fail to boost minority students' performance every year through 2014, when all students must be proficient in reading and math. Howard County has set an earlier deadline of 2007.

Congressman Cummings Announces \$500,000 Grant for B&O Railroad Museum

Because of a joint supporting letter from Congressman Cummings, Senators Paul S. Sarbanes, Barbara A. Mikulski, Congressmen Benjamin L. Cardin, C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, and several other Members of the Maryland federal delegation, the U.S. National Park Service awarded the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore a federal grant of \$500,000 to restore its roundhouse roof, which collapsed during the February 2003 snow storm.

The \$30 million in damages included the collapse of the museum's centerpiece attraction—the roundhouse—and the destruction of a major collection of railroad artifacts. Of the total cost, \$20 million was covered by insurance, requiring the museum to raise \$10 million through donations.

The \$500,000 grant was not only the largest grant given toward the restoration project, but also one of the largest grants awarded by the U.S. National Park Service's Save America's Treasures Program this year. "We believe we received such a large grant because of the strong support we received from our congressional delegation," said Stefanie Fay, the museum's Director of Development. "This grant will pay for three years of materials and labor to restore the artifacts collection."

The B&O Railroad Museum includes the collection of 19th and 20th century railroad equipment, original shop buildings, and other important treasures of American railroad development.

"I applaud all of my colleagues in the Maryland federal delegation for pushing for these funds," Congressman Cummings said. "It is important to preserve and present railroad history, since rail played a major role in advancing our modern transportation system and infrastructure."

Congressman Cummings Celebrates New Addition to Enoch Pratt Free Library

On Monday, November 3, Congressman Cummings participated in a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the new 43,000 square foot annex of the Central Library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

The multi-story addition contains the Maryland Reading Room, the Mencken Room, a Special Collections Room, an African American Reading Room, and a public computer lab.

Baltimore businessman, Eddie Brown and his wife Sylvia contributed \$1 million to support and enlarge Pratt Library's 13,000-volume African American collection, which includes notable works such as an original Benjamin Banneker almanac and other volumes relating the collective experience of slavery.

"I am honored to be here today to support the expansion of the Enoch Pratt Free Library," Congressman Cummings said at the ribbon cutting ceremony. "I spent many hours of my childhood at this library and it is encouraging to know that many more children will be able to learn and experience the world through the added resources now available in this expanded facility."



At a Capitol Hill rally, Congressman Cummings (at podium) calls on the Congressional Leadership to refocus the legislative agenda on restoring jobs. Since January 2001, the United States has lost more than 3 million jobs. (Standing next to Congressman Cummings are U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (Iowa), and at the far right, U.S. Congressman John Conyers (Michigan), along with several activists.)

Jessup Pastor Gives Opening Prayer for House Legislative Business

On Tuesday, November 4, 2003, Pastor Johnny Green, minister of the Bethel Assembly of God in Jessup, Maryland, served as the House of Representatives' guest minister. During the visit, Pastor Green gave the opening prayer prior to the beginning of legislative business on the House floor.

"The special opening prayer given by Pastor Green allowed the nation to experience the words and wisdom of this outstanding minister, who has inspired his Howard County area congregation for many years," Congressman Cummings said.

During the opening prayer, Pastor Green was accompanied by several members of his congregation who observed him from the House Gallery.

Each Congress, Members may invite one minister from their district to serve as a guest minister. According to a spokesman for the House Chaplain Father Daniel P. Coughlin, ministers of all faiths including Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Muslim have given the guest opening prayer over the years.



Pastor Green (far right) who served as the Guest House Minister, is applauded by (from left to right) Parishioner Tricia Rodgers, wife Alice Green and daughter Kimberly Green for giving the opening prayer prior to the start of legislative business on Tuesday, November 4.

Howard County Outreach Centers

First Monday of the Month:

Glenwood Library, 2350 Route 97
Cooksville, MD 21723

Hours: 4:00PM - 6:00PM or by appointment

Second Monday of the Month:

Howard County Central Library
10375 Little Patuxent Pkwy.
Columbia, MD 21044

Hours: 4:00PM - 6:00PM or by appointment

Second Wednesday of the Month:

Savage Library, 9525 Durness Lane
Laurel, MD 20723

Hours: 4:00PM - 6:00PM or by appointment

Third Monday of the Month:

Florence Bain Senior Center
5470 Ruth Keeton Way
Columbia, MD 21044

Hours: 9:00AM - 11 AM or by appointment

Fourth Monday of the Month:

Miller Branch Library, 9421 Frederick Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

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